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Unit 16 Legal W(rites): Constructions of race and masculinity in texts with court rooms scenes

By David King and Anita Jetnikoff

Rationale

In this unit we aim to engage students with a range of texts (visual as well as printed) and to show them that they can make meaning from the text by reading 'against the grain' or 'beneath the surface' of conventional and/or popular interpretations. To do this we hope to involve students in what might be called 'critical literacy'. Critical literacy for us is a way of teaching that has been built up over the past seven years that we have taught and studied together. It is not a way of assessing, nor is it a pedagogical recipe that can be 'done' in a single lesson or even a disconnected unit. It is a way of engaging students with the texts of the world that they might encounter. It can rest alongside genre theory as well as functional grammar and it co-exists easily with teaching students the mechanics of reading and writing. In short, it is one of the repertoire of strategies that we use every day to challenge and teach young men **and** women to be as widely literate as possible.

English teachers have a range of exciting adolescent fiction from which to choose. In making this choice the literary canon is often overlooked in favour of texts which are more appealing and apparently relevant to young Australian readers. Teachers may also find that they are placed in a position where they must use texts from the cultural heritage canon. These works have often been criticised for presenting 'great men and great deeds', however, they can become a rich source of investigation of historical discourse and subtext. In rereading these texts as historically constructed documents of the past, we can revisit the worlds constructed in the cultural heritage works as history and as discourse, rather than as 'Literature'. Any text from the cultural heritage canon can be reexamined in this way, so that the focus is on language (as socially constructed discourse) rather than 'Literature'. In other words, any text can be countertought for the purpose of discovering *new readings*.

This unit focuses on a different approach to the well loved and much read novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird*. This work has often been examined in the classroom using traditional literary criticism where the text is analysed in terms of characterisation, setting, plot, structure, style of writing and theme. This can be used as a starting point, but reading of texts like *To Kill a Mockingbird* can go much further. We would like to approach the novel in another way; one which examines subtext, particularly with regard to how the language and contexts of the 'law', marginalise and alienate people. In doing so, we aim to engage students in the active meaning-making process of reading and rewriting texts.

The language of law (legal jargon) whether it is in the courtroom or commodified for novels or television, has long been recognised as a specialist discourse that is inaccessible to most people. It can also be seen as a patriarchal, elitist discourse. In cases of rape, the law often protects the perpetrator, sometimes blaming the women as victim. This patriarchal predisposition to protect the perpetrator does not, however, extend to men of colour. In both the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* and the documentary *Broken English*, black men are accused of raping white women. Tom Robinson, in the novel, fictionally represents the 'Negro' of the Deep South of America. *Broken English?* tells the story of the trial and false conviction of Rupert Max Stewart, an Arrente Aborigine.

We also use the film *A Time to Kill*. This gives a contemporary reference point and allows students to see how the 'victim' can be repositioned by changes in public and public and social discourse.

By investigating the way that legal language in these texts socially constructs both masculine characters and race, the alienating and marginalising effect of legal discourse and the contexts in which it occurs can then be critically deconstructed. Students can then attempt to reconstruct language that is more inclusive. In doing so, the 'real' language of law can also be demystified somewhat.

Mass media texts, particularly the 'nightly news', commercial radio news, and newspapers present a set of discourses, which most students, regardless of gender or race can, and do, easily access. Notwithstanding this, the images presented by the media are so pervasive that few can escape their impact. These images and ideas are often instrumental in reinforcing, informing and indeed constructing young people's ideas concerning masculinity, race and the intersection of the two.

On the TV and in the newspapers articles concerning Aboriginal and Islander people in relation to the law appear with great regularity. Stories frequently appear about Aboriginal deaths in custody, the land rights debate, Law 51 (a council bylaw in a North Queensland city which prohibited drinking in parks as a direct response to homeless Aborigines), the Pauline Hanson debate, Daniel Yock's death outside the Brisbane watchhouse, the framing of Kelvin Condren and the huge percentage of Aboriginal males who are incarcerated for one reason or another. These texts are frequently uncritically read and become part of a stereotypical discourse of racism in Australia.

For these reasons students must learn to critically read the reporting of and representation of men and women of colour in the press. Although the unit focuses on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and African American men the issues easily relate to other marginalised groups and situations where people are denied justice because they do not possess the linguistic skills, or confidence, necessary to challenge legal language and/or mass media (mis)representations.

Context

The city in which we work is largely working class and has a large industrial and service base. The schools in the district service a wide cross-section of students. The city has a large army population, a university, and various other services. It has a 10 per cent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population, as well as representation of various other cultural communities, such as Greek, Italian, Chinese, Lebanese, Thai, Filipino, and Central and South American, European Anglo-Australians. Therefore, at any school there is likely to be a mixed student population.

The six week unit is designed for a senior class of mixed race and gender in a metropolitan school. It can be undertaken in a range of classroom contexts and across the curriculum. Legal Studies, Senior Modern History or Media Studies teachers may find this approach useful, as well as English teachers. The teaching of the unit does need to be taken cautiously. It opens up many gaps for competing discourses. And, if not careful, teachers could inadvertently reinforce negative images and stereotypes.

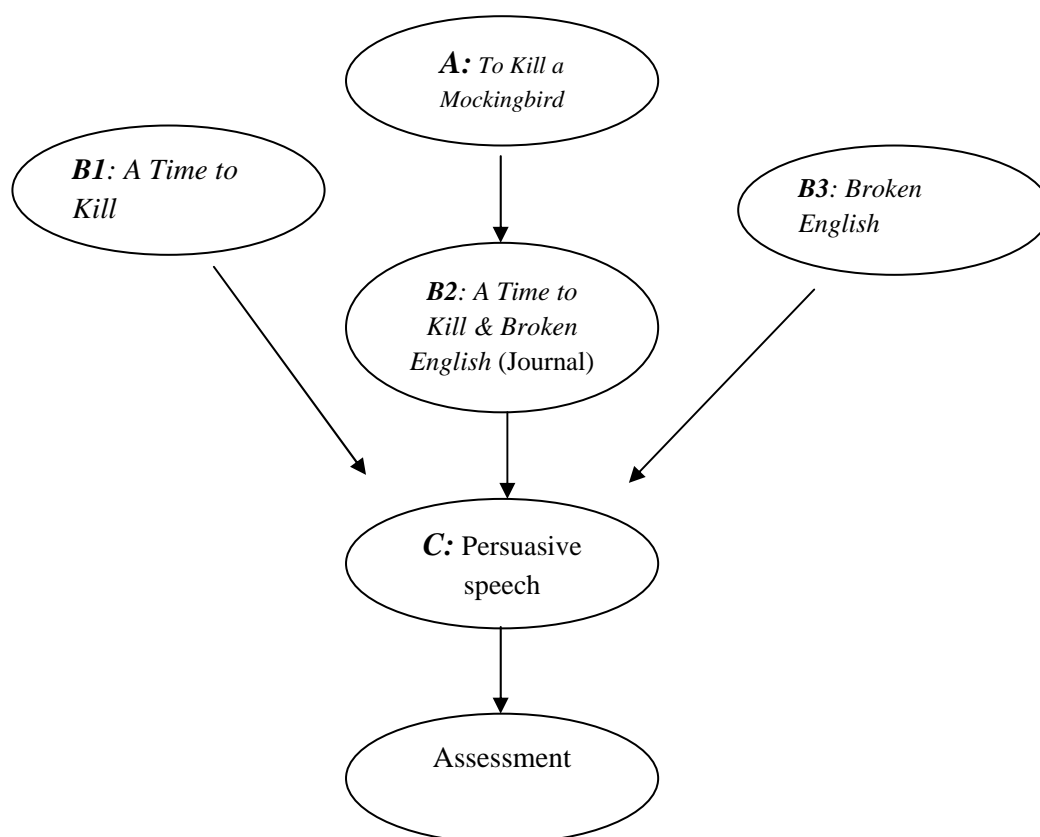
This unit focuses on a different approach to the well loved and much read novel *The language of law* (legal jargon) whether it is in the courtroom or well as the intersection of 'law' and the media. The secondary classroom is often the only context in which a critique of mainstream media 'propaganda' can be undertaken safely. We recognise the problems that teachers may face in discussing politically charged issues in the classroom. If however, one of our educational aims is equity, teachers need to make strategic and sometimes risky forays into taboo areas.

Activities and assessment: A linear overview

This unit could last for up to six weeks. The entire unit need not be undertaken, segments can be used independently and texts may vary according to availability and the preference of the students and/or teacher.

We have taught the unit in one form or another and find that it engages both girls and boys as well as students from varying racial, cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Even though *To Kill a Mockingbird* is often used at Year 10, we feel it is best suited for a Year 11 or Year 12 class because of the challenging and sensitive nature of the issues raised by the text and because of complex language. However, we recognise that with a little modification and imagination, the unit can be rewritten and adapted for a wide range of contexts.

Diagrammatically the unit can be represented as follows.



The unit is organised so that there are different pathways. From the core task, A, one can proceed to either B1, B2 or B3. With a little modification a jump could be made from A to C, omitting the film *A Time to Kill* and the documentary *Broken English* so the study is simply an analysis of *To Kill a Mockingbird*. All of the pathways lead to the persuasive speech assessment. This unit follows pathway A → B2 → C3.

Assessment.

In the unit there is one assessable item: a persuasive speech. However, journal work may be assessed as reaction to literature and the media as well. There is a wide range of choices in the persuasive speech. The aim of the assessment task is to focus on speaking as a way of encouraging students, particularly boys who often resist public speaking, to communicate publicly, on their feet, and in an elegantly persuasive manner. All activities are linked by student journal work which can be used for assessment if it suits the teacher, class and work program. This work assists reflection and continuity for both the teacher and the learners. In it the students record ideas, questions, discussion points and responses to worksheets and other classroom discourse.

Assessment task

A persuasive speech at a political rally, civil rights meeting, conference, a church sermon, or a speech to parliament, or a school visitor from the Aboriginal community or Social Justice Commission.

Optional assessment

A journal or Worksheets in response to novel, films, documentary and articles.

Resources

- 1 News articles (teacher can collect recent ones from the media, video, news reports, etc.) concerning the social positioning and construction of Aboriginal people in this country.
- 2 *To Kill a Mockingbird*, film and novel (Chapters 10-23) by Harper Lee.
- 3 Worksheet 1: *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

4.Film: *A Time to Kill*.

5 Worksheet 2: *To Kill a Mockingbird*. and *A Time to Kill*

6 Documentary *Broken English*.

7 Worksheet 3: *Broken English*.

8. Worksheet 4: Part A Speech to persuade: guide to assessment task

Worksheet 4: Part B Fundamentals of public speaking

Worksheet 4: Part C Model of an effective persuasive speech.

Learning experiences table

Learning phase	Activities	Links	Resources
Orientating phase	<p>Determine students' prior knowledge by teacher directed questions and class discussion. It may be necessary to delicately deal with and confront student held stereotypes and misconceptions.</p> <p>Read and discuss a wide range of news articles (from the media, video, news reports, etc.).</p>		Teacher collects Recent newspaper articles, news clips, magazine articles, etc.
	<p>Teacher should ensure that students understand the terms social construction, positioning, deconstruction, otherness and discourse.</p> <p>Analyse these texts to see how the media constructs and positions black people in Australia. How do the reports differ? How are they similar?</p>	This will link directly to later tasks and ways of writing/ speaking about texts.	Refer to Jetnikoff and King in this volume for a brief discussion of these terms. Also see: Kress (1987) Fair clough (1989), Moor (1990), Janks (1993)
	Discuss the way that the media constructs and reports on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The discussion could also extend to other racial cultural groups (e.g., Asian immigrants in Australia) depending on current media issues.		
	Particular emphasis should be given to the language of the text (i.e. how it says what it says).		
Enhancing phase	<p>View the video of <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> (It has been rereleased and is available at many video outlets -if the film is unavailable the entire novel will need to be read).</p> <p>Using class discussion and Worksheet 1, analyse the film in terms of plot, characterisation, setting, theme and historical background.</p>		<p>Video: <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i></p> <p>Worksheet 1</p>

	Read Chapters 10 to 23 - the trial scene -of <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> .	Link film and written text.	Novel: <i>To Kill a Mocking Bird</i>
	View video: <i>A Time to Kill</i> . Class discussion on the plot and characterisation of the film.	There has been criticism of this film concerning the sanctioning of violence and the right of people to 'take the law into their own hands'. Explore this in class discussion.	Video: <i>A Time to Kill</i>
	Using class discussion and Worksheet 2, compare the two stories.	Link <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> and <i>A Time to Kill</i> .	Worksheet 2
	View SBS Documentary Class discussion on the 'court case' and issues of social justice.	Link <i>Broken English</i> , <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> and <i>A Time to Kill</i> .	Documentary: <i>Broken English</i> Worksheet 3
	Teach structure for a speech to persuade.		Worksheet 4, Part A
	Ensure students understand the nature of hortatory and analytical text (see Worksheet 4).		See: Martin (1990) for a discussion of hortatory and analytical text
Synthesising phase	Have students read and identify the Structure and language of a speech to persuade and ensure that they understand the structural and linguistic features of the genre. Students develop the context of their speech in consultation with teacher. Students develop content of their speech. This may involve library research.		Worksheet 4, Part C: The Model. Students' journals, class notes, teacher discussion and consultation.
	Students write the speech. This can be done entirely by the student or drafted with the teacher (in writing and orally).		Worksheet 4, Part B.
	Teach the fundamentals of public speaking. Students deliver speech.		Students can do this as an oral exam in front of the class or alternatively on video tape.

Worksheet 1

To Kill a Mockingbird

The word 'subtext' literally means below the words (text). In this worksheet we will be attempting to analyse some of the subtext of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, especially that of the courtroom scene. After watching this film *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and reading Chapters 10-23 of the novel, answer the following questions in your journal.

- 1 Briefly describe the events of the story (i.e. the plot).
- 2 Construct a table like the one below. Fill in the table (where you can) for each character. Discuss your answers in groups.

Insert table Table 3 Using the above table, construct another as follows:

	Age	Race	Male Or female	job	Physical description	Character	Physical attributes
Atticus							
Scout							
Jem							
Dill							
Calpurnia							
Tom Robinson							
Helen Robinson							
Boo Radley							
Sherrif Tate							
Mayella Ewell							
BobEwell							
Judge Taylor							
Mr Gilmer							
Mr Underwood							
Reverend Skuye							
Miss Maudie							
Aunt Alexandra							
Mrs Dubose							
Dr Reynolds							

Using the above table construct another as follows:

	Black male	White male	Black female	White female
Jobs				
Living conditions				
initiates action (i.e. does things)				
Recipient of action (i.e. has things done to them)				

4 From information gained from both the above tables, write a description of 'society' in Maycombe. How are these social groups positioned within the text:

- black men
- black women
- white men and
- white women?

5 In groups, **and** using the information from the first table, discuss the way that the text constructs white children. Is it 'really' the way children are? What does it say about the way that children were positioned (what they should or should not do or be in society)? Is it the same for black children? For mixed-race children?

6 Stereotypes are 'textual short cuts' that allow the reader to create quick pictures of characters, They also reflect the way people are positioned in society by (often subconscious) social attitudes. Stereotypes might be used for groups of people such as the mentally ill, children, men, women, African- Americans and poor people. What stereotypes are used into *To Kill a Mockingbird* (the novel and the film)? How might stereotypes limit what people think about others?

Extension activity

Read the entire novel. Write a brief discussion (no more than one page in your journal) commenting on the difference between the written **and** filmed text and why you think this has occurred (this can be done in point form).

Worksheet 2

To Kill a Mockingbird and *A Time to Kill*

1 The story of *To Kill a Mockingbird* is set in the 1930s in the southern states of the United States of America. However, it was written in 1960, at the beginning of the American Civil Rights Movement and the picture of society that is depicted in the novel is similar to that which existed in contemporary southern American society. The theme has been taken up in other films as well. For example, consider the film *A Time to Kill* (1996). After watching this film, document how representations of attitudes towards race have or have not changed in the time period between the two texts.

2 Compare the court scenes of *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *A Time to Kill*. What are the differences in the way that Tom Robinson and Carl Lee are constructed and positioned in the courtrooms. How is this done? (That is, how are they positioned as black men in the context of the courtroom?)

3. Carefully view and read the case for the defence for both cases. How is the language of each similar and how is it different? For example: do Atticus and Jake appeal to the jury's reason or their emotions?

4 How does each defence lawyer attempt to 'free' his (they are both male) client? What mode or tone does each create in the courtroom with their summing-up speeches?

5 Consider the prosecutor's case in each story. Does he (they are both male) appeal to logic, reason or prejudice? Give examples from each film to support your answer.

6 What 'attitude' does the prosecutor take to the accused? What does each prosecutor rely on to attempt to convict Tom Robinson and Carl Lee?

7 Are there any specialised legal words used by the judge, the defence and the prosecutor. Make a list of these. What is the impact of this language on the people being interrogated?

8 Consider the juries from both cases. How is the 'make up' of each different or similar? What efforts and techniques does each lawyer use to sway them?

9 Define justice for yourself. Consider social justice, legal justice, moral justice, etc.

10 In which story do you think justice was achieved? How and why do you think it was or was not achieved? Support your answer with evidence.

11 What comment do you see each story making about society in the differing interpretations of justice? How does this relate to being a black man? What changes does it reflect in society? Speculate how things might have been different if each of the accused had been white.

12 What were the similarities and differences between the police in the two texts. How did this affect the way that they interacted with the accused?

Worksheet 3

Broken English

*Deconstruction of legal contexts - mystification and marginalisation in **Broken English***

1 One of the most important messages to be read from this TV documentary is the power of the language and the power of contexts and audience. What was Max Stewart's first language? Is there a similar situation with Tom Robinson in *To Kill a Mockingbird* and Carl Lee in *A Time to Kill*?

2 What were the problems that Max Stuart had with the justice system because he was unable to speak, read or write English? In what other situations might this same thing occur? (Consider young offenders appearing before a court.)

3 Other than the complicated language in court, what might Max Stuart have found alienating and intimidating?

4 According to this documentary, what part did the police play in the miscarriage of justice in *Broken English*?

5 Discuss in groups and list in your journals some of the similarities between the case of Max Stewart and the trial of Tom Robinson in *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Why was the case of Carl Lee different? (Consider how social values have changed over time).

6 Refer to your answers in Worksheet 2. What was similar about the defence barristers in Broken English and the other two texts? (refer to Worksheet 2)

7 What was similar about the jury and the prosecution in all three cases?

8 What part did ignorance play in all three cases?

9 In recent years, Daniel Yock, an 18-year-old dancer and brother of land rights activist Murrandoo Yanner, died outside the West End watchhouse in Brisbane (*Courier Mail*, 6 and 13 November 1993). His death sparked a huge controversy in Queensland. From the attached news clippings, what similarities can you see between the case of Daniel Yock and the case of Max Stuart?

10 Compare the events in all three cases (the factual story of Max Stuart and the fictional stories of Tom Robinson and Carl Lee). What events in all three cases made it difficult for the defence lawyers to defend their clients?

11 From your discussion in this unit, can you argue that the legal system defends the legal rights of all people?

Worksheet 4

Part A

Speech to persuade - guide to assessment task

Purpose of a speech to persuade

The aim of a speech to persuade is to convince an audience that the position that you are advocating is reasonable, logical and the best course of action to follow. It relies on two types of language: hortatory and analytical. Hortatory text is emotive writing or speech that appeals to the 'heart and soul' of your listener. Analytical text speaks to the 'mind'; it is logical, factual, and relies on evidence rather than emotions. A speech to persuade is a balance between the two. It stirs the listener to action while at the same time making them feel that it is reasonable to do so.

(Reflect on the speeches of the defence in all three of the cases you have studied. Which mode of language did each one use?) The key to persuasive speaking lies in balancing hortatory and analytical writing with a logical structure that leads your listener to the opinion that what you are asking them to feel that it is reasonable to do so.

Structure of a speech to persuade

1 Introduction: Attention step

The purpose of this step is obviously to get your audience's attention but it also aims to create sympathy in your listener for what you are about to say. This step needs to:

- introduce your topic
- gain your audience's attention
- establish your credentials as a speaker
- give an indication of what is to follow.

Some techniques that can be used are:

- visualisation (ask your listener to imagine you are someone else)
- a quote
- an illustration (visual or real picture)
- statistics
- a story.

2 Needs step

This section outlines what the problem is and why something needs to be done about it. This step needs to:

- state the problem or need
- give an illustration of the need
- tell what will happen if the need is not fulfilled (i.e. the ramifications of the situation)
- and relate the issue to your audience.

3 Satisfaction step

This tells the audience what they should do to satisfy the need or solve the problem. This step:

- proposes a plan or idea
- gives a theoretical demonstration and/or
- makes reference to practical experience.

4 Visualisation step

This step paints a picture or creates a visualisation in the minds of the listeners as to what might happen if they do not follow your call and what will happen if they do follow your call. It involves:

- stating the negative picture *or*
- painting a positive picture about what will happen if your call for action is needed *or*
- a combination of the two.

5 Action step

This is where you ask your audience to do something. You are calling them to action. You might ask them to join a protest, to write a letter or to vote with you in parliament. It leaves the audience feeling ‘Yes, I will do that.’

Revision

Basically the speech to persuade structure goes like this.

- Imagine this (Grabby them by the heart).
- This is why the situation has occurred (The Problem) .
- This is how; we will stop this from happening (The Solution: **solve** the problem).
- This is what the world will be like if we don’t do this. But if we do, the world will be much better (Seeing the Big Picture).
- This is what we must do just Do It!).

Exercise

1. Read the speech written by a 16 year-old Year 11 student (model: Part C). It is written to parliament and calls for MPs not to vote to block the Northern Territory’s voluntary euthanasia laws. Using two different coloured pens, underline the hortatory language (blue) and the analytical language (red).
2. On the side of the text identify the different steps in the speech. (Some steps may occur in the same paragraph.)
3. Which steps are predominantly hortatory?
4. Which steps are predominantly analytical?

Your Turn

1. Choose a topic and investigate how you feel about the topic. It should not require too much research because you are not giving a speech to inform.
2. Decide what you want your audience to do (keep it simple).
3. Work out three points to support your position.
4. Describe what will happen if your listeners do not follow your proposal (one sentence only.)
5. Describe what will happen if your listeners do follow your proposal (one sentence only).
6. Write your own speech (750 words, i.e. 150 words per minute).
7. Before you practise the following ideas about public speaking need to be taken into account. For the final draft presentations - you’ll need notes, your preparation, lots of practice, relaxation and confidence.

Worksheet 4

Part B

Fundamentals of public speaking

1 The spoken genre

- The audience - considerations: who, what, why, how many
- The context - considerations: where and when

- Modelling the persuasive speech - the difference between reading and speaking
- Motivated sequence - the importance of structure: for example, Josh's speech about euthanasia for the sequence and structure. Note the connecting words.
- Time and length.

The spoken genre employs similar linguistic devices to the written persuasive text, but differs from the written in the choice of words and the mode. In a text that is written to be spoken aloud, the language should be plain, even if you are talking to a group of professionals. The reason for this is that the text is usually heard, only once. The listener must get your message the first time around. Because the text is orally delivered the presentation or the manner in which you speak, is as important as the text itself.

Genre: Exposition (text- type- The speech to persuade)

Audience (students decide)

Purpose: To persuade your audience to ... (students decide)

Context: Choose from the range of options

2 The audience - research considerations: who, what, why, how many

If you can gather as much information about your audience as possible, you will be better prepared and your speech will be more effective. Ask the following questions of yourself.

- Who are the people that make up my audience? (What is their background, socio-economic makeup, age, gender, history of the organisation.)
- What is their interest in my speech? (What specific lines can I take to involve this group.)
- Why, specifically, am I speaking to this group? This determines your specific purpose- the more specific you can be the better, e.g., general purpose - to stamp out racism; specific purpose - I'm going to both move and persuade my audience, make them listen, learn something new. When I'm finished speaking they will not only give support, but recognise the worthiness of the topic.)
- How many people will be present - (Use the numbers to create a comparison e.g. one in five people suffers some form of mental illness in their lifetime? Ask yourself - How can I move them to act?)

3 The context - considerations: where and when

- The size of the venue is important (for a public rally or church you may need a mike or a rostrum, in which case you'll need to practise using these).
- The time of day.

Such research will enable you to prepare an appropriate speech for your particular audience.

4 Points to remember about oral delivery

Fundamentals of public speaking: keep the audience interested - familiarity, proximity, relevance, sincerity, vocal modulation, confidence, keep within the time frame.

- First we check the structure of the outline -peer checking - can we each discern the structure of the speech from our outlines? Go through it with someone else.
- Flesh out the points, remembering little proximity tricks such as saying 'all of us here', 'we can never imagine, ladies and gentlemen', etc. Use the familiar and the close (what do you know about these people?) to maintain relevance and interest. This can be done by practising in front of a mirror or on video or audiotape or by getting a fellow sufferer to listen to your speech as you draft it aloud. ***Speaking the speech is the most important part of the process:*** you can never practise too much or too often. Write out your linking sentences between each of the motivated sequence steps (e.g., check the model).

5 Fundamentals of public speaking

You also need to keep certain things in mind when you're practising so that your speech does not sound boring -use the following acrostics to help you remember the vocal modulative devices we can use to make speaking interesting.

Projection - throw your voice out so you can be heard -if you have a mike, speak normally - there's no need to shout but you have to keep your mouth fairly close to the mike.

Language register - make sure it is appropriate for your audience - e.g., formal for Rotarians, semi-formal for school students. Understand what you are saying and ensure that your audience does (avoid words that will trip you **up**).

Sincerity - at least attempt *to* sound sincere. Looking at your audience instead of your notes or card is essential, as is ...

Tone of voice -note how much more relaxed people sound when not reading!

Intonation - it's important to vary your intonation (the music of your voice - try to avoid monotonous patterns).

Pitch, pace, pause, phrasing and parenthesis - these are fairly self-explanatory, but once again did you notice that when people speak as opposed to reading, pauses approximate those of normal speech? Pace is important overall, *so* that you speak within the time frame you've been given.

Rhythm - speaking and reading have different rhythms. You're much more likely to speed read than you are to speed speak. Vary the rhythm - you can get excited around the call to action section, but the problem section could probably be said a little more slowly.

Emphasis - emphasise important words by pausing before or after them, varying your pitch or volume, or inserting a stock phrase such as, 'This... ladies and gentlemen ...is one of the most important things to understand about emphasis. Think how intonation can vary stress in normal speech to the more exaggerated patterns of a presented speech, which is, after all a performance.

Timbre - watch the timbre of your voice. Nervousness can sometimes change the pitch and sound quality of your voice. You may become more strident or louder or speak faster than normal. Try to practise keeping your vocal cords relaxed, breathe deeply from your abdomen and keep your shoulders relaxed. Also practise using palm cards and hand gestures and varying the expression on your face as well as moving your eyes from place to place or face to face.

Stress -sometimes you can change the stress of normal English words for emphasis. Think how intonation can vary stress in normal speech to the more exaggerated patterns of a presented speech, which is, after all a performance.

6 Let's do it! Choose your method - video, audio, mirror or peer - use evaluation guides to check progress. Check the structure of the speech - suggestions about vocal presentation can help.

7 Feedback

Watch, listen, discuss, evaluate.

Worksheet 4

Part C: Model of an effective persuasive speech

Euthanasia

by Joshua King

(Year 11)

I want you to imagine yourself as an 80-year-old man or woman with terminal cancer. You have lived a rich, full, independent life but because of your condition, you are now confined to a hospital bed. There is no-one to visit you, you have no surviving family and you are in extreme pain, you feel that to continue living is to continue suffering. Then you find a ray of hope in what seems a hopelessly futile and painful existence. There is a solution to your pain and a way to end your desperation. You move to Darwin. There, with the aid of someone who is sympathetic to your plight, you hope to die peacefully and with dignity in an apartment overlooking the sea. However, upon arrival you discover that the federal government is blocking the Northern Territory's euthanasia legislation. Ladies and gentleman, many people all over the world die painfully from incurable diseases such as AIDS and cancer. Many of these people have suffered years of agony, humiliation and frustration as they try and come to terms with their condition. Many

resolve to spend their final years enjoying life to the fullest but for some, stuck in their bed, having to rely on others to move around and perform the most basic of daily tasks, it is just too much. These people are left with few options other than euthanasia.

There are, however, a number of moral issues surrounding euthanasia. To begin with, three points in the euthanasia debate must be made quite clear. Firstly, it is not the doctor's choice, nor the family's choice. It is the individual's choice to end their own life. Secondly, euthanasia is not suicide. It differs from suicide in that often people who survive do so only on the drugs administered to them by doctors and have no quality of life. Finally, doctors are already playing God by prolonging life. Why should it be any different to help someone end their misery and pain by administering an injection?

It is for those people with terminal illnesses who do wish to end their life that the option of euthanasia must be given. For this to become reality, it is vital that the federal government does not block the Northern Territory's revolutionary new laws. Rather, it is important that the government makes euthanasia available to all terminally ill Australians and helps them to understand what is involved.

According to recent surveys conducted for the *Bulletin* magazine by the Morgan group, 76% of the Australian public want the choice of managing their own deaths. The Andrews' bill simply goes against the wishes of the majority of Australians; the wish to die with dignity if the need arises. If the government does not allow the Northern Territory to proceed with its euthanasia laws, it will be committing a travesty of justice by failing to recognise the desires of the vast majority of Australians and the rights of individuals to live and die within the law. People who do wish to end their life, will be forced to do so on their own. They will have no family members around and as a result will die lonely and without dignity. Family members will never know whether death was painful and many will blame themselves. And, the people who assist the terminally ill to end their life with dignity will be criminals.

By allowing the Northern Territory euthanasia laws to pass, we will be one step towards removing some of the **pain**, heartache and uncertainty surrounding the taking of one's life. I ask you to consider the pain that terminally ill people experience and the relief that euthanasia could bring to them and their family members. So please, when the time comes, do not vote to block the Northern Territory's voluntary euthanasia laws.

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